



Vol. 13, No. 6

# The Iguana



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Photo by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

**A member of Task Force-Aurora drills a hole into a granite block for a new schoolhouse in Guatemala as part of New Horizons 2001.**

## New Horizons builds up in Flores, Guatemala gains schools, clinics

**By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett**  
*Public Affairs*

Aurora, goddess of the dawn in Roman mythology, is also symbolic of new beginnings. The aurora is the dawn of a new day. For a few village communities in Flores, Guatemala, Joint Task Force-Aurora is giving them just that – a new start.

The sweat poured. Shovels dove deep into the ground. The dusty old school yard filled with children as they watched the U.S. military men work across the road on what was to soon be home to grades kindergarten through sixth grade ... their new schoolhouse.

The old school, back across the well-traveled dirt road, sat silently, weatherworn, wooden slabs falling apart from each other as walls, wooden strips lining the single room once designed as tables, and long, splintering boards for the children to sit on. A single chalkboard stood against the front wall of the room; it had seen many generations of children and

many lessons year after year had been repeated on its face. It was a Central American version of the "Little House on the Prairie" schoolhouse, with even more dust and even less supplies and protection from the weather than one can imagine.

Joint Task Force-Aurora's mission in Guatemala is to build five schools, five wells and to assist with road repairs around Flores. Three medical readiness training exercises will also provide medical care for Guatemalans in the area. More than 700 United States active-duty, Reserve and Guard military members representing all services from units worldwide will participate in JTF-Aurora from January to May this year.

Members from Joint Task Force-Bravo, Honduras, and personnel from the 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment out of Alaska are also providing support for this exercise.

New Horizons exercises like JTF-Aurora are humanitarian and civil

## Living at Task Force-Lempira

**By SPC Jeremy Heckler**  
*Iguana Editor*

Out on a dusty plain in the state of Lempira, Honduras, sets of tents sit in the hot sun, home to the builders of schools and clinics for the next six months.

The base camp is a simple one where the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines sleep in large tents on green cots. The shift work leaves some trying to catch a few winks in the heat of the Honduran dry season.

"We currently have laundry facilities, two MWR tents with televisions, books, magazines, computers and telephones as well as exchange facilities to buy shaving, bath and other products," said CPT Wilfredo Rivera, base camp commander.

The base is not without its amenities. The barbershop offers many of the same facilities that the Soto Cano beauty shop offers, such as a body massage and a full-service haircut. Next to the beauty shop is a souvenir shop offering a variety of goods from necklaces to bags.

Improvements are constantly being made to the base camp. Members of the 678th Engineer Detachment recently installed electrical circuits to expand laundry capabilities. The team, waiting to get to work on electricity and plumbing projects at the Lempira projects, invested some of their electrical knowledge to equip the base camp with outside lighting.

Many of the soldiers congregate around their links to the world beyond Honduras. Some can be seen enjoying the simple pleasures of the afternoon talk show.

"My favorite thing to do here is watch television," said SGT Robert Trotter of the 269th Military Police Company. "It's my link to what's going on in the outside world."

The base camp itself has become part of the fabric of the Gracias, Lempira community as the Guardsmen and locals interact with each other.

"They [the villagers] treat us as friends; it is like they've known you for years," said Rivera. "It is a really good feeling for all of us."

Life at the base camp may not be like staying at a five-star hotel, but it is home for the troops of Task Force-Lempira.

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# Women have long, storied history in world events

By CSM Herman Fisher  
JTF-Bravo Command Sergeant Major

Of all of God's creations, none have proven over the years to be more resourceful, determined, compassionate or patient as "woman."

Long before recorded history, she was quietly shaping the world around her. It was she who gave birth to the rulers of every nation on earth. Her bones are the oldest proof of the evolution of our race. Everything that is genteel in our nature can be traced back to her. What troubles me most is the fact that some of us still don't understand what women have always known, "Man Has No Future Without Woman!"

For years we have treated woman like the wind; you can't see it, smell it, or taste it, but you know it's there. Like the wind, over the years, she has always been there.

She was there in 1776; her name was Abigail Adams. She wrote her husband, John, who was attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Abigail asked that he and the other men working on the Declaration of Independence, "Remember the Ladies." John's response was, "The Declaration's wording specifies that all men are created equal."

She was there in 1866; their names were Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. They formed the American Equal Rights Association, an organization for white and black women, as well as men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage.

She provided cures long before modern medicine began to treat the sick for a fee. She was there in 1990; her name was Antonia Novello, the first woman and first Hispanic to be appointed as the Surgeon General of the United States of America.

Over the years, we have with wonderment and an unspoken pride watched her overcome insurmountable odds to achieve unimaginable feats.

She was there in 1921; her name was Bessie Coleman, the first woman to earn an international aviation

license and the world's first licensed black aviator.

Never one to rest on past accomplishments, she was there in 1999; her name was Eileen Collins, the first woman to command a space shuttle mission.

Throughout history, she has quietly and methodically established herself as a key ingredient to the survival of our species and possibly our planet.

With such a vital role to play in our future, why do we abuse her and deny her the rights we enjoy? She's proven her ability to excel in the business community, yet her annual income is still less than her male counterpart. She is more likely to be living from paycheck to paycheck, and that's one paycheck away from living on the streets. Odds are she is the single head of the household in one-third of our nation's homes. In her lifetime she will know one female (friend or family) that dies of AIDS. Small wonder that in her adolescent years she comprises the largest segment of society likely to commit suicide. Despite the promise of a hard and sometimes brutal life she endures, in fact she grows stronger every day.

Her ability to express herself even in the worst of times is still the testimony to the human spirit. In her life, she will be abused or will see one of her kind abused, yet somehow she will stay in harmony with her surroundings. As Maya Angelou wrote in 1970, "I know why the caged bird sings."

In 1865 President Andrew Johnson awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor to Dr. Mary Edwards Walker for service to the nation during time of war. To this date, no woman has ever received a similar honor. However she was there as war correspondents in World War I. Between World War II and Vietnam the only positions she didn't fill were those that put her in direct contact with the enemy. Today, with no clearly defined battle lines on the ground or in the air, she has proven her ability to fight for what she believes in.

Although history has produced many well-known and famous women, this country is just as grateful for the contributions of some present-day heroines.

Women like Linda Fisher of McVeytown, Pa., a se-

mi-retired working mother of four. Were it not for this great lady, Joint Task Force-Bravo would not have SSG Marcella Jo Fisher, one of only five female soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment. Working as a UH-60 Blackhawk technical inspector, Fisher just recently arrived in Honduras but has been in the Army for over 15 years.

Every day that Airman 1st Class Penny Jurica goes to work as a member of Joint Security Forces, she does so with the knowledge that she is a source of pride for Mary Joy Meadors. This mother of two is credited for being a source of strength and inspiration for her youngest child.

It has been said that behind every great man there is a greater woman, and in the case of Maj. Marbel Roy, the same is true. A mother of five, Amalia Castro of Stamford, Conn., has followed the successful Air Force officer career of her second of five children for the past 16 years. Assigned as the Task Force personnel officer six months ago, Maj. Marbel Castro-Roy is responsible for keeping the Task Force's paperwork and personnel moving in the right direction.

This is the year 2001, let's make this the year of firsts. The first year we treat women with dignity and respect, as an equal. The first year we follow her lead, because history has shown that she knows where she's going. The first year we recognize that she is far stronger than we could ever be, because the weight of the world has always been on her soft shoulders.

## Chaplain's Corner

### What are you willing to sacrifice to God?

By Chaplain (CPT) David Phillips  
JTF-Bravo Chaplain

This is the season of Lent. Lent is celebrated 40 days before the celebration of Easter Holy Week. Usually during Lent, we think of something we can give up in our life in honor of what our Lord Jesus Christ gave up for us on the cross. This reminds me of a story a friend e-mailed me some time ago and have received here recently. It goes like this:

"God's Wings, an article in National Geographic several years ago, provided a penetrating picture of God's wings over us as well.

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage.

One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick.

When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had

carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise.

She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live."

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge." (Psalm 91:4). Being loved this much should make a difference in your life, too.

Thus, during Lent, when we reflect what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, what are we willing to give up for Him? He gave His life for us because he loved us and knew we could not save ourselves. The Bible states in 1 Corinthians 15:3, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Like the mother bird that protected her children from the fire, what can we give of ourselves for the betterment of mankind? How can we make the world around us a little better because we were willing to get involved or to make a sacrifice? Who could use a loving or friendly touch from us today?

# The Iguana



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# Clearing drugs during Costa Rican Central Skies

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn  
Public Affairs

Many challenges were faced and overcome by a joint-agency operation during the certification phase of Central Skies in the mountainous jungles of Costa Rica this month, leaving the score counter-drug enforcement agents — 1 and dope growers — 0.

Soldiers and airmen from Joint Task Force-Bravo, the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, U.S. DEA agents and Costa Rican counter-drug operators took to the skies March 7 to 13 in a dual-purpose role — to certify the Central Skies mission and weed the countryside of marijuana. Both roles were successful.

With more than 385,000 plants found and destroyed in three active days of grooming the mountainsides, it was a continuance of success beyond the obvious.

Last year's Central Skies mission found football-sized fields out in the open where agents could get at the marijuana plants easily.

This year, agents found 20-by-20 yard patches back in the mountains and in less accessible areas. The patches are camouflaged with other crops, concealed from air surveillance by trees and shrubs, or located where obstacles will prevent a helicopter from landing, said a U. S. DEA agent who has worked Costa Rican counter-drug measures for nearly five years.

This shows past operations are working, he said. Retreating to secluded mountainous fields and reducing the amount of plants grown reduces the amount of product available on the street, so it is a definite sign that Central Skies is being effective, the agent concluded.

Access problems did not inhibit the current operations, mainly due to the training of the multi-national force.

CPT Dave Arnold of JTF-Bravo and 1SG Samuel Coston of ARFOR were two of the rappel masters that fired off the Central Skies mission with some rappel and special patrol infiltration/exfiltration system (SPIES) training.

Arnold said they certified the two nine-person teams made up of one U. S. DEA agent and eight Costa Rican counter-drug operators in rappel and SPIES on day one of the exercise. The Task Force can insert teams via helicopter either through SPIES, rappelling or a Jacob's ladder — which is a rope ladder that dangles 20 feet below the aircraft.

Coston stated the hills and vegetation made this training much more intense as typical exercises are conducted on mostly flat, barren ground.

The training was valued as well.

"The agents really appreciate it. I've had some host nation police give appreciative comments and thanks for the time the military has taken to train us. They are really grateful for the resources, professionalism and camaraderie JTF-Bravo has provided," said a DEA special agent on his first mission into the Costa



Photo by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

**A MEDEVAC aircraft comes in to provide medical support during a Central Skies counterdrug mission in Costa Rica.**

Rican area of operations.

After certification on insertion/extraction, it was time to put the training to the test in the jungles eradicating pot plants.

Missions were coordinated in the operations center, where a big wall map loomed and indicated strike targets provided from previous surveillance and insider-source information. Team plans were coordinated and flights commenced.

Helicopters whirled and then disappeared over the jungle-laden horizon headed for the mountainous interior. After gathering their full team at a rendezvous point, it was up into the strike zones.

UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters flew a grid pattern over the target boxes looking for the illegal plantations. On a map, the targets appear clear, but cruising above

*See Drugs, Page 7*

## Commanders' Corner

# 'Progress through Unity' every day at JTF-Bravo, world

By Mo Eckols  
Education Services

The spirit of 'Progress through Unity' is alive and well at Soto Cano Air Base, where Air Force, Army and Marine personnel often agree, "... base is so small, everyone knows everyone, just like family ..." This is not simply a local slogan for the day or moment. These dedicated servicemembers have come to a remote, unaccompanied site, leaving their families temporarily, motivated by challenges and a positive spirit. With their eyes on that mission guidepost, it is apparently understood that mission success, as well as being a good role model as an American overseas, starts with just one individual. It then extends in community cooperation that ultimately results in cohesive progress that perpetuates unity worldwide.

Through worldwide teamwork, national heroes accomplish great feats among kings, presidents and generals, yet it started with one individual cooperating with another, extending to the host-nation, then radiating united good will worldwide.

One of my heroes, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, described how he "saw" Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin Abdul Mohsen al Tuwaijri. As they both

walked out of the palace, the Sheikh grabbed the Schwarzkopf's hand and walked out hand-in-hand with him.

Schwarzkopf reflected, "As we walked out of the palace, the sheikh was holding my hand, an Arab expression of friendship ... I was still trying to get used to it."

Compassionate and thoughtful understanding stimulates trust and unity rather than an impulsive erroneous perception of insult among peoples of different cultures.

Each American comes from some indigenous or immigrant ethnicity. It takes only one individual to correct the wrongs of history. My uncle, Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii, has always chosen to see positive similarities among indigenous Americans that unite rather than differences that divide.

His vision has taken many years for Congressional laws to sanction cultural rights of Native Americans, native Hawaiians, and Alaskan Eskimos' today; meanwhile, these indigenous people have been united as dedicated military personnel in large numbers.

Holding others in high esteem, Congress passed various laws that united and protected indigenous peoples of America to perpetuate ways of culture that had already been dying out across America. When legisla-

tion passed giving Hawaiians many native rights as one of the three indigenous groups in America, I wrote to my uncle to congratulate him. He sent the entire legislative package that reflected a Congress that today compassionately rights the wrongs of the past and promotes unity over division.

Schwarzkopf saw unity as a problematic challenge when the Saudi military position was, "Americans were on our soil, so of course we're in charge of everything." He said that he knew that the Americans' response would be, "We're sending most of the forces; we should be in charge of everything."

By having Americans under American commanders, British under British commanders, Egyptians under Egyptian commanders, Saudis under Saudi commanders, and joint cooperation united at the top, success was realized.

As though talking about a remote hooch here in Honduras, former President Dwight Eisenhower wrote, "If we keep our eyes on the guidepost, then no difficulties along our path of mutual cooperation can ever be insurmountable. Moreover, when this truth has permeated to the remotest hamlet and heart of all peoples, then indeed may we be at our swords into plowshares and all nations can enjoy the fruitfulness of the earth."

March 23, 2001

JTF-Bravo

# Team meets medical needs, helps people, animals in Lempira

By SPC Jeremy Heckler  
Iguana Editor

In the villages of Lempira, Honduras, members of Joint Task Force-Bravo's Medical Element (MEDEL) and a joint force of active duty and reserve units restored the health of villagers and the animals they care for during a medical readiness training exercise (MEDRETE) held recently.

Hondurans filled the steps and waiting areas as the time to see the U. S. military medics, doctors and dentists approached. The medics examined them and treated them for a variety of illnesses.

Medical personnel saw 4,100 patients from March 7 to 15 according to 1LT Lorna McKoy of MEDEL, the officer in charge of the MEDRETE. She said the patients received preventive medicine classes that dealt with the importance of hand washing and sanitation, and multivitamins were distributed. Another preventive medicine class dealt with proper dental care, such as the proper use of a toothbrush.

Medical personnel set up a triage station after the preventive medicine class. Medics examined the patients and determined what ailed them. One of the difficulties the team had was building a medical history of their patients, one of two key parts in diagnosing a condition.

"When we asked them questions on their medical condition, they would say 'yes' to everything, making it difficult for us to make a diagnosis," said CPT (Dr.) Roy Mortenson, 109th Medical Battalion.

"We find a lot of minor illnesses, such as headaches, gynecological problems, congestion and minor aches and pains,"



Photos by SPC Jeremy Heckler

**A doctor from the 109th Medical Battalion, South Dakota National Guard, examines a patient during a recent MEDRETE in Lempira. Medics treated 4,100 patients during a seven-day period covering seven separate villages.**

said McKoy. She said that the more serious illnesses were referred to Honduran doctors.

"Most of the people have some sort of upper respiratory problem," said Mortenson. "We usually treat it with cough syrup, ibuprofen or some other over-the-counter medication." He added that the more serious infections were treated with antibiotics.

The MEDRETE team also enlisted the services of a Navy civil affairs officer, who also happened to be a medical

doctor in the civilian world.

"This has allowed me to access the population and the military in a deeper way and to enhance the effect of civil affairs and leave people more satisfied," Lt. Cmdr. Alan Spira, 3rd Civil Affairs Group. Spira has worked on several different medical exercises worldwide and said that it was old hat for him.

In another part of the MEDRETE site, dentists performed tooth extractions on suffering patients. In yet another area, veterinarians plied their trade.

"I assisted the veterinarian with routine vaccinations, parasite control and sick call for animals," said SGT James Barclay, an animal care specialist with MEDEL.

Barclay said that he gave out a variety

of different vaccinations unique to each animal.

"Vaccinations are very important because they last for a year, and in some cases, such as rabies, humans can catch the disease as well," said Barclay. "So when you treat the animal population, you protect the human population."

Barclay said treating animals could be difficult at times, because unlike a human patient, they can't tell the doctor where it hurts.

All of the medical personnel left Lempira with a positive outlook on what they've done for the people of Honduras.

"The best part of the MEDRETE is getting out to the villages and seeing humans and animals cared for," said Barclay.



**Dentists perform a checkup on a Honduran boy. In addition to performing medical and dental treatment, personnel gave preventive medicine classes.**



**SGT James Barclay of JTF-Bravo's MEDEL gives a vaccination for hog cholera during a MEDRETE to the state of Lempira.**



# USAAAD Witchdoctors bring medical aid from above

By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett  
Public Affairs

They could tell you horror stories and tearjerkers. They could tell you stories with Hollywood endings. In their job, absolutely every second counts. It's a matter of life or death. It's a matter of limb or eyesight. It's being 'first-up' and ready day or night for the unexpected. They take care of the casualties of war as well as those of peacetime missions.

Meet the witchdoctors of Central America.

They are the United States Army Air Ambulance Detachment (USAAAD), a 21-person team of highly trained aeromedical evacuation personnel who are trained to save lives at a moment's notice. The Witchdoctors, the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) detachment assigned to the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment at Soto Cano, are the only forward deployed MEDEVAC unit in the Western Hemisphere.

The Witchdoctors' four MEDEVAC UH-60A Blackhawk helicopters — distinguished with a red cross on a white background — sit on the ramp here with one on constant alert-status for real world missions.

A MEDEVAC aircraft is a regular UH-60 Blackhawk configured with necessary medical apparatus, such as a high-performance hoist and a carousel of litters. The flight crew differs from the usual two pilots and two crew chiefs; one of those crew chiefs is substituted with a flight medic in a MEDEVAC crew.

Here, MEDEVAC aircraft are flown predominantly at night, which requires use of night-vision goggles. The missions range from care for real-life traumas, such as gunshot wounds and car accident victims to neonatal care for premature infants. When it comes down to the wire, where life, limb or loss of eyesight is at stake, no one is turned away. Hondurans, active-duty, reservists and military retirees have been cared for, as well as DOD civilians.

SPC John York, a MEDEVAC crew chief, said one of the most enjoyable aspects of his job is the mission itself. "I came to Soto Cano from an air assault unit in Korea where you train to attack, attack, attack and practice offensive and defensive postures," York said. "Here, as a crew chief with a MEDEVAC unit, the mission is very different from what we normally do as a crew chief in a regular UH-60 company. Here, we save lives."

SSG Jonathan Spiller, a flight medic and NCOIC of the medical section, agreed with York.

"I've been a medic for almost eight years now, and still love it. It's the real-world missions that make it so enjoyable. You know you're making an impact on people's lives, and in many cases it's a life or death situation," said Spiller.

To further illustrate this point, York



Photo by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

**SSG Jonathan Spiller, a Witchdoctor flight medic, inserts a team of Costa Rican physicians and a villager into a jungle in Costa Rica to treat an epidemic that had broken out while Joint Task Force-Bravo was in Costa Rica on a Central Skies counterdrug mission in August 2000.**

and Spiller shared their stories of a couple of their more memorable missions. In El Salvador, earthquakes plagued the land, leaving many homeless and without food and medical care.

York told one of his "Hollywood-endings" stories.

"The earthquake damage done in El Salvador was pretty shocking, even from the air," York said. "In one small town we were making deliveries of food and medical supplies to, an elderly lady came out and asked us if we could assist by taking a young girl whose appendix had burst to the hospital in San Salvador. The little girl could have died. Instead, the last word I heard was that she survived and will get to see a little more of her life and the world around her."

Not all stories have Hollywood endings, however. "It's not often that you have to deal with an infant MEDEVAC here, but one night, those of us on 'first-up' were called in to transport a four-month old girl who had difficulty breathing and was determined to have pneumonia to Hospital Escuela in Tegucigalpa," Spiller began. "On the way to Tegucigalpa, red warning lights went off in our aircraft and we had to make an emergency landing at Hospital Militar, which was

on the way. Basically, we were lucky to even make it there; the way the 'transmission' looked when we landed, we could have easily been 30 seconds from death ourselves. It was very unexpected."

Spiller went on to say that from there, the little girl was transported via vehicle to Tegucigalpa, but the road is one of the worst he's ever seen. Spiller heard later that the little girl did not make it. "We did everything we could on the way there ... gave her IVs, oxygen and any other care we could provide for her. She died anyway."

Spiller went on to say that children are the hardest to deal with, because it's an innocent life at stake, and you're indirectly responsible for whether that young life lives or dies. To top that mission off, a CH-47 Chinook had to sling load the MEDEVAC aircraft back to Soto Cano to be fixed, a nightmare in the minds of all good UH-60 crew chiefs and pilots. Bottom line, said Spiller, is that being a U.S. Army flight medic is an experience to remember.

CW3 Perry Wilds, a Witchdoctor pilot, said the lives of MEDEVAC crews are very different from the standard UH-60 pilots'. "Those who are on 'first-up,'

usually a crew of four on standby for a 20-minute recall, have 20 minutes to go from whatever they were doing to being wheels up ... with the patient, crew and aircraft all ready to roll. '777' showing up in our pagers is not just a number to us; it's another life we could possibly help save."

Wilds went on to say that as a MEDEVAC pilot, keeping a sense of urgency balanced with a steady calm is the 'all important' because they have a person's life in their hands. Everyone on the MEDEVAC team works together towards one common goal, Wilds said, and that's why he believes there is such an awesome camaraderie between the pilots, flight medics and crew chiefs.

"There is such a huge diversity of roles in MEDEVAC," Wilds began. "Medics have a huge responsibility in these missions. The medics are the liaison between the hospital and us. The medic works directly with the patient and MEDEL here, preparing the patient for transport on the aircraft. If we were in the triple-canopy jungle of Costa Rica, for example, the medic would be even more indispensable; the medic would be the first on-scene to respond."

Spiller mentioned that flight medics typically are trained in cardiac care as well as defibrillation, life support/oxygen, treating open wounds and providing respiration for patients. A medic can also stabilize fractures, care for gunshot wounds and deal with most major traumas.

The crew chiefs and pilots assist with basic medical care where they can. Some crew chiefs have been through the Army's combat lifesaver course, making them an even more valuable asset. Crew chiefs also must keep the aircraft ready and safe for flight and deal with the maintenance of the aircraft.

Wilds said that he enjoys being a MEDEVAC pilot. "What makes it exciting for me is that the mission has such variety. One day you could be transporting a person to Tegucigalpa, the next, doing an over-water offshore hoist rescue or MEDEVACing a burn victim or a neonatal for care."

At Soto Cano, the Witchdoctors also support Central Skies counter-drug missions, New Horizons engineer and medical exercises, medical readiness training exercises and Operation Weedeater counter-drug missions, to name a few. These missions are located all over Central America and parts of the Caribbean.

Wilds, Spiller and York all agree on one main thing about their jobs in MEDEVAC: the esprit de corps of everyone on the team.

"The sense of camaraderie that develops when you work these life-or-death missions is awesome," said York. "You get fired up working with the pilots, medics and other crew chiefs on real-world missions. It is truly a unique experience."

# AFN lights up airwaves, highlights life on Soto Cano

By SPC Jeremy Heckler  
Iguana Editor

They come through the radios of Soto Cano two times a day, broadcasting a mixture of cool tunes and light banter as well as broadcasting life on base back to the states. They are a group of folks keeping Joint Task Force-Bravo in touch with life back in places like Miami and Dallas, or even Manhattan ... Kansas, that is.

They are the Armed Forces Network, Honduras crew. The staff of three broadcasters and two technicians keeps the Power Lizard, 106.5 on the dial, rocking.

Each morning is kicked off by SGT Jeff Stevenson's morning show from 7 to 9 a.m. Stevenson mixes in a little bit of everything from soft rhythm and blues to some of the more interesting selections of the callers.

"I do the standard morning show," said Stevenson. He added that he tries to stick to the basics because he is working solo.

"If there was a morning 'zoo' of DJs with more than one DJ, I'd place a higher priority on entertainment," said Stevenson. "Because it is just me here in the morning, I try to stick to information and music because no one likes a yammering jock."

Stevenson livens up his show with observations and anecdotes on current events in the world and on base.

"I mainly try to poke fun at myself and the Army, but not in a disrespectful way," said Stevenson.

The Afternoon Rock Shop that airs daily from 2 to 5 p.m. takes listeners through a mix of music from the 60's to the present day. Three days a week, SPC Lorne Neff takes charge of the show.

Neff said that he tried to pick music from a variety of genres, from modern mainstream to 60's and 70's classic rock. Wednesdays are "way-back" Wednesdays, where each hour of the show is dedicated to a different decade of music and sometimes even a different genre altogether.

"Sometimes I play 80's pop or rap music from that time for variety," said Neff. Neff's show receives a lot

of callers who add their own requests to the lineup.

"A lot of times, people call with requests that don't fit the format, but I try to play it because I know they are listening to the show," said Neff, who is on his second tour of duty at the Power Lizard. "The first time I was here, I had been here a week and had never seen South Park," said Neff. "Someone called and requested a popular song from the show and after listening to 30 seconds of the song I knew it was the wrong song to play.

Fifteen minutes later, the Task Force commander came through the door and said 'never play that song again.'"

"This is an awesome job," said Neff. "Back in the States, all I do is work ceremonies. Here, I work with the most modern equipment and get to do the job I trained to do."

A new addition to the Afternoon Rock Shop and the Power Lizard is SGT Kevin Quill, a rookie straight out of the Defense Information School.

The former cavalry scout is slowly getting the hang of the show.

"This has been hard," said Quill. "Half the time, I'm thinking about what button I'm going to push next." He said he has been relying on the help of his fellow DJs and the use of his own printed aids.

"This is fun, but you need to pay attention or you'll definitely look like an idiot," said Quill. "You really need to think two or three steps ahead and have stuff loaded."

"I'm not a real talkative person, but it's cool because on the air you can be anyone you want," said Quill.

When the guys aren't blasting music through the airwaves, they are creating clips to send back to the Army Broadcasting Service's home offices about life on Soto Cano.

SSG Curt Phillips, chief maintenance technician and AFN detachment commander, said that they submit stories to Soldier's Radio and Television for broadcast.

The broadcasters familiarized themselves with the workings of the AVID video editing system.



**Above:** SGT Jeff Stevenson wakes up Soto Cano on the Power Lizard Morning Show. Twice a day, the soldiers and airmen from AFN-Honduras take to the airwaves with news and music from across Soto Cano.

**Right:** SPC Lorne Neff, a broadcaster with AFN-Honduras, works on the AVID digital editing machine, developing a training video for ARFOR. In addition to broadcasting on the radio, AFN sends clips of JTF-Bravo back for air on Soldier's Radio and Television.



Photos by SPC Jeremy Heckler

"The computer allows you to look through clips by just pointing and clicking on them without searching through tapes," said Stevenson. One of the first stories created with the help of the AVID system detailed the work of Joint Task Force-Bravo's relief efforts in El Salvador after an earthquake struck their country.

Phillips and Staff Sgt. Brian Villa keep the station on-line, keeping all of the equipment running for the radio station, as well as keeping the AFN television feed on.

"In this business, you never know when you're going to lose cable, and if the cable does go out, we provide a backup with television programming," said Phillips.

Villa, who also lives at the studios, is on call 24-hours-a-day to fix any of the glitches that could sideline operations.

"I like being able to live at my job," said Villa. "It means that I can concentrate solely on the mission of keeping the station up and running."

The broadcasters and technicians are a tight-knit group. Villa shares space at the Power Lizard with Stevenson. At any time of the day the group can be seen enjoying some light moments.

"These are great guys," said Phillips. "I believe in teamwork at work and at play, and these guys live it."

It is this team that keeps Soto Cano Air Base and Joint Task Force-Bravo aware and informed each and every day.

## The Power Lizard 106.5 FM Rockin' JTF-Bravo

**Monday through Friday**

**7 to 10 a.m.**  
Power Lizard Morning Show with SGT Jeff Stevenson

**11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
Lunchtime Jams with DJ Styx

**2 to 5 p.m.**  
**Mon., Wed., Fri.**  
**Tues., Thurs.**

Afternoon Rock Shop  
SPC Lorne Neff  
SGT Kevin Quill

**7 to 9 p.m.**  
**Mon., Tues.**

Latino show with DJ Frank

**8 to 10 p.m.**  
**Wednesday**

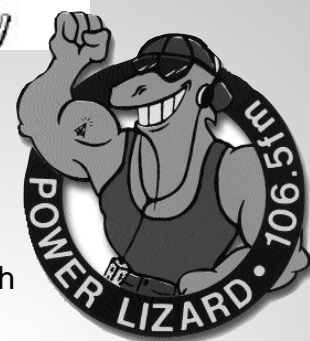
Jazz/Blues with Big Daddy Gringo

**8 to 10 p.m.**  
**Thursday**

Night Watch with Various DJs

**8 to 10 a.m.**

Christian Radio Show with Victor Harris



# Keeping the movies showing at a theater near you

By Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn  
Public Affairs

Lights, camera and action on the big screen. Scores of film aficionados and casual moviegoers flock to the base theater several times a week to catch the latest and greatest from Hollywood. Many enjoy the film, but few know what goes on behind the scenes that make up the Soto Cano cinema.

The theater is a relatively new attraction to the base. A plaque in the entry foyer commemorates the August 21, 1999 grand opening. Projection equipment that was transferred from a now-closed Panamanian base made the theater possible, according to Staff Sgt. Bryan Wilcox, of AFFOR, a theater projectionist.

Wilcox has worked behind the scenes running film since Nov. 2000 and has more than 40 movies to his credit. Operationally, the system is complex and antiquated. A pair of six-foot-tall, mammoth projectors is bolted to the floor side by side. Like mechanical beasts from your granddaddy's youth, these artifacts give customers what they pay for — the large screen image not possible on a hooch's VCR/TV playback.

Two-foot diameter tape reels that weigh 10 pounds each are set up and alternated for the showing of a single movie. There are normally five to eight tapes for each movie shown. The trained eye can catch the point where the film makes the transition from one reel to another. Wilcox said there are transition cues that can be seen on the screen to indicate when one unit needs to play and the other is to stop. He made me promise not to divulge the subtle cues — it tends to ruin the movie if you spot them.

Wilcox said occasionally there are problems. Most issues only result in minor delays between film transitions, but one episode had a loaded film reel that spun off an unlocked spindle. With the movie still playing, the tape crashed six feet to the floor with a nest of film spaghetti unraveling in the fall.

Beside the pure enjoyment of watching a long-awaited release, there is also the love for munchies that can sometimes be better than the film itself. A full compliment of beverages and snacks can be purchased from the concession stand for much less than a commercial



Photo by Master Sgt. Jeff Bohn

**Staff Sgt. Bryan Wilcox of AFFOR threads the cumbersome film into the complex camera system in preparation for the evening movie at the base theater that will entertain dozens of Soto Cano customers.**

theater in the states. Run by AFFOR's Enlisted Club volunteers, proceeds go to support many charitable activities said Tech. Sgt. Kris Caldwell, who has served as the AFFOR Enlisted Club's president since July 2000.

Concession proceeds support two local orphanages and AFFOR internal programs such as airman and NCO of the quarter recognition.

As much as three hundred dollars a month is donated toward AFFOR's orphanages through cookouts, structural and plumbing improvement projects, or shipping costs for stateside clothes donations, according to Caldwell.

It takes a team to make it work. Caldwell said it isn't just one person that makes the concession stand run.

The team of volunteers fills nearly 50 positions a month and anyone is encouraged to volunteer for duty.

"It gives you a good feeling of satisfaction to contribute to this group. It helps out the less fortunate like the orphanages. For some people, it gets them out of their rooms and gives them a chance to meet new people," said Caldwell.

So, if the urge strikes to take in the big screen or contributes to a good cause, consider giving the theater a few hours of time as a customer or a volunteer. It could be an Academy Award-winning experience.

Folks interested in becoming a volunteer at the theater should send an e-mail to Staff Sgt. Jeff Bristow, AFFOR's concession manager, to inquire about the availability of slots.

## • Drugs

(Continued from Page 3)

the jungle at 90 miles per hour with constant elevation changes is comparable to looking for a peanut in a mountain of shag carpet.

With the acutely trained eyes of the counter-drug agents, the targets were methodically spotted and the choppers settled in for an insertion.

Precariously hovering over the landing zone — close enough to rappel, far enough to keep away from the mountainside and triple-canopy vegetation — agents were inserted by helicopter crews in a well-choreographed maneuver using one of the trained methods.

On the ground, agents immediately set to work clearing the land of marijuana plants that ranged from six inches to fifteen feet tall — pulling, cutting, shredding and piling the *cannabis* contraband.

When all the marijuana was gathered

up, it was time to light it up and burn it all.

Upon clearing the field, agents reversed the insertion procedure and became airborne again — to find another field and incinerate more dope. In all, there were numerous fields located and destroyed.

While the marijuana in Costa Rica is considered a lower grade than some other countries' production, it is still a drug to be reckoned with.

Growers can expect to get up to \$150 a pound for their crop, according to a DEA agent. In a country that has an average annual income of \$2,500, the illegal fields can augment their income significantly.

He said the Central Skies process is essential to the deterrence of marijuana growing for a few reasons.

First, there is an ecological concern with using herbicides that would also harm the good floral resources — so cut-and-burn operations are the most practical and safest means of destruction of the narcotics.

Secondly, Costa Rica lacks the airlift capability for inserting teams into this type of countryside, and with the movement of fields into ground-inaccessible areas, airlift is the preferred option.

Finally, the speed of an air insertion means growers will have very little "advanced warning time" to possibly come in and harvest before agents can destroy their cash crop.

"This was eight days of intense training for everyone," said LTC Wayne DeNeff, ARFOR commander and commander of this mission. "Staff Sgt. Pedro Soler's Joint Security Forces element provided outstanding security for us given the dangerous activity in the local area. Teamwork pays off."

With Costa Rica Central Skies certified as a formidable counter-drug measure, it sends a strong message to illegal marijuana growers that their considerable investment will be reduced to some smoking ash so long as the skies are filled with the sound of whirling helicopters loaded with justice, ready for action.



Where is the phone?  
¿Dónde está el telefono?

I am an American Soldier.  
Yo soy un soldado de los Estados Unidos.

What is your name?  
¿Cómo se llama?

My name is...  
Me llamo... or Mi nombre es...



## BRIEFS

### AF tenure hits 22 years

Air Force personnel officials recently announced the decision to change technical sergeant high year of tenure from 20 to 22 years of service effective July 1. Although this change is effective July 1, all tech sergeants, regardless of Air Force specialty code, are now eligible to apply for the fiscal 2001 Temporary HYT Extension Program. This will allow tech sergeants with HYT dates before July 1 to apply for a HYT extension to the 22 years of service point. People can contact their local military personnel flight for more information. Implementation guidance is forthcoming from the Air Force Personnel Center.

### Bicycle Safety Rules

When riding a bicycle on base, make sure you wear a proper helmet at all times. A reflective vest/belt must be worn during the hours of darkness. Bicycles cannot be ridden on the sidewalks. JSF has been directed to confiscate bicycles of violators for 30 days and notify the appropriate chain of command.

### Comayagua Policy

As of March 16 per order of JTF-Bravo commander: Based on input and the assessment by JSF, Comayagua and the immediate area surrounding it are on limits with the following conditions:

1. Curfew is midnight, on both weekdays and weekends.
2. All areas (except those on the published off limits areas) are on limits except discotheques, bars, and all other establishments whose primary business is entertainment and selling of alcohol. Specifically, Celios is off limits and will be added to the permanent off limits list for at least 60 days before its status is reviewed. Restaurants are on limits as well as private homes and alcohol may be consumed at these locations.
3. Overnight passes and leave in Comayagua are only authorized for airmen and soldiers whose families live in Comayagua and the chain of command verifies that the spouse does in fact live there. Servicemembers must remain overnight in a residence. Hotels are not authorized.

### Basketball Courts

The basketball court will be closed for repairs beginning March 24. A temporary court will be erected in the B-area parking lot.

### Word of the Day

The chapel is offering a daily devotional called "Word of the Day." Anyone interested in being added needs to send an e-mail stating such to phillipd@jtfb-emh1.army.mil.

## A trip to the falls of Pulhapanzak

By 1st Lt. Kim Garbett  
Public Affairs

The water crashed over the edge and tumbled down over the rocks below. Divers jumped from rocks along the fall's outskirts, where a perpetual rainbow, or *arcoiris*, as it is called in Honduras, settled over the spray created by the waters touching the pool below. Children waded in the pools and played in the water as the river rushed by them. Pulhapanzak Falls, situated about a half an hour past Lake Yojoa in Honduras, creates a once-in-a-lifetime experience for travelers from all over the world. A guide teaches visitors how to say "rainbow" in Spanish, German, French and Dutch.

Visitors from Soto Cano can follow their guides behind the falls to see small caves and experience a survivor-type environment. No flashlights are needed for this, but it is a good idea to bring a waterproof camera and an extra change of clothes, because no doubt about it, a good head-to-toe soaking is in order.

Be prepared to get muddy before you hit the bottom of the falls; rainy or dry season, the falls spray water along the path and make hiking to the base of the falls an exciting game of who can keep their footing the best.

After your hour of waterfalls and exotic flora and fauna, jumping off rocks and playing Indiana Jones cave explorer, everyone leaves happy and exhausted to have

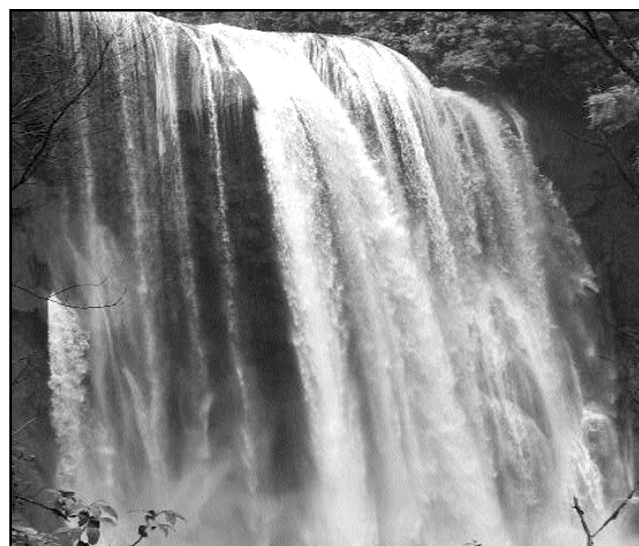


Photo by 1st Lt. Kim Garbett

lunch at Lake Yojoa, just a short ride back down the streets of Honduras.

You've been on the road since 8 a.m., but there's still much more fun to be had. If you like to boat, go fishing or stay overnight at a quiet cabin away from base, Lake Yojoa is the place for fun.

Joint Task Force-Bravo's Morale, Welfare and Recreation center can set troops up for these tours or any number of other enjoyable and memorable trips.

The tropics of Honduras offer many outdoor activities, from scuba diving in clear blue waters off the Bay Islands, to sunning on the beach at La Ceiba to enjoying hikes in the mountain ranges.

## • Aurora

(Continued from Page 1)

missions designed to foster good will and improve relations between the United States and the host nation. A typical New Horizons exercise consists of engineer construction projects and medical readiness training exercises. Engineers focus on building schools and clinics, digging wells and road improvements. Medical specialists provide routine surgery and treatment that would otherwise be unavailable to many of the locals (i.e., tonsillectomy, cleft palate reconstruction). New Horizons also provides the United States with an opportunity to train military members in austere environments they may see in future operations.

In all actuality, however, Task Force-Aurora's base camp, situated a few miles outside of Flores, Guatemala, is not as austere as one might imagine. This Task Force is the first deployed force to use a package called 'Force Provider.' Force Provider is a ready-made deployment kit for the set-up of base camps, and includes everything from air-conditioned latrines to a laundry facility to a chapel that can cater to over thirty-three different religions. Also included is an MWR tent (ping pong, movie screen, and board games and a popcorn machine), a fully functional gym, a base exchange, a chow hall where heated meals can be made and

air conditioned sleeping bays. Each individual facility is shipped in metal containers in separate units to the deployed location.

Task Force-Aurora has the capacity for 550 military personnel with the Force Provider package. There is also a hospital tent on-site where medical personnel can treat almost any patient and almost any condition, from cardiac arrests to hypertension. A dental clinic is also available.

The days at the various sites for Task Force-Aurora are challenging. Air Force, Army, Marine Corps and Navy personnel wake up between 4:30 to 5 a.m. and work a long, hot day in the Guatemalan sun. Their workday normally terminates around 5 p.m. or lasts until the site's goals for the day are met. SPC José Rosario, a member of the 456th Quartermaster Company out of the Puerto Rican Army National Guard, said the days are long at TF-Aurora. "Everyone is so tired at the end of the night ... they debrief at meetings, clean up and prepare for the next day."

For those "energizer bunny" personalities, some will go to the gym or to the MWR tents to relax.

"But," Rosario said, "the work here is really fulfilling. You know you're doing something for someone else who really needs it and can really appreciate your sweat and days spent away from your families." Rosario, when not serving in uniform, works in the police department in Puerto Rico in the finance section. Rosario is the task force commander's driver.

COL Jaime Rivera, commander of Task Force-Aurora, said the force members are working hard and are meeting all projected goals in excellent time.

"We're on track and doing well with finishing our projects so far," he said. "We have people here from units all over the world and they swap out every few weeks, depending on their rotation times. The transitions have been good and the incredible motivation of the troops have really set the pace and tone for this task force."

Master Sgt. Brenan Stuhl with the Air Force Reserves out of the 482nd Civil Engineer Squadron at Homestead ARB, Fla., works with the ROWPU (reverse osmosis water purification unit). He is a park ranger in his "spare" time.

"Morale is pretty good here," Stuhl said. "A lot of progress is being made with the projects and the facilities here are great. I've never seen a base camp like this before ... the showers actually have shower stalls!"

Another reserve forces soldier, SPC Nate Halvorsen with the 1011th Quartermaster Corps from Kansas, said this deployment is an experience entirely different than any other for him. "It's my first time out of the states, and there's a lot to see here in Guatemala, including famous sites like the Tikal Ruins. But, as you and I both know, it's not exactly Kansas." He smiled. Halvorsen works with the ROWPU unit at TF-Aurora. In 'real life,' Halvorsen works at a Juice Factory in Missouri.